

The Saxtonville Tavern
Near Raven Rock
Delaware Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Saxtonville Tavern
Near Raven Rock*
Delaware Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

Owner (and occupant): W. Wallace Mc Aloan

Dates of Erection: About 1782, with two additions
between 1801 and 1835

Architect: Unknown

Builders: Moses Quimbey (owner 1801-1810). Enlarged
by Nathaniel Saxton (owner 1810-1836) as a
tavern

Present Condition: Original, used as private house

Number of Stories: Two and one-half (no cellar)

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - stone masonry (unexcavated)
Exterior walls - stone masonry, lime plaster
faced and whitewashed
Interior walls - stone masonry party walls
and frame partitions, plastered
Chimneys - stone masonry, lime plaster faced
Roof - gable and leanto, wood shingled; double
deck front porch has modern asphalt roofing

Historical Data:

Analysis of the architectural history of this
composite house (the result of three successive building
operations) and of the related history of the original

*On the river, about a half mile northwest of the Raven
Rock station of the Belvidere Division of the Penna
R.R. at Bull's Island and the covered bridge over the
Delaware River to Lumberville.

and successive owners begins with the southeastern end unit, and with Moses Quimbey as its first known occupant, apparently as early as 1782 and certainly in 1801.

Previously, by an unrecorded deed of 23 December 1743 John Howell and wife Catharine released in fee to Isaiah Quimbey^(a) of Amwell Township, Hunterdon County, a 300 acre tract of land in that township, "above the Falls, on or near the River Delaware, called Raven Rock," which grantor's wife had received by the will of her father John Ladd of Deptford Township, Gloucester County, dated 4 January 1731 and proved 17 June 1740.

The grantee Isaiah Quimbey of Amwell Township, having thus acquired the 300 acre tract in 1743 held the same intact until 24 March 1801, the date of a deed by which he conveyed to George Wall^(b) of Bucks County, Penna., for \$4000, some 65½ acres thereof, "including

(a) Isaiah Quimbey b. 11.5 mo. 1716 in Westchester Co., N.Y., settled in Amwell Twp., Hunterdon Co., N.J., 1742, mar. there 21.6.1743 Rachel Warford, b. 20.3.1723, who d. 10.3.1777, and he mar. 2nd 24.6.1778 at Buckingham Friends Meeting House, Bucks Co., Pa., Hannah Kinsey, and mar. 3rd 20.9.1786 Miriam Betts of Solebury, Bucks Co., Pa., and he d. 6 of 4 mo. 1807. (quote) Isaiah's ancient stone mansion is about a mile northeast of the Raven Rock station on the Belvidere Railroad, on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River." (Henry C. Quinby, Genealog. Hist. of the Quinby-Quimby Family, 1915, p. 131).

(b) About 1785 Col. George Wall and Wm. Hamilton owned the site of Lumberville, Pa., on the bank of Delaware River opposite Raven Rock, which site became known as Wall's Sawmill and Wall's Landing as late as 1814 when the name was changed to Lumberville. (B.F. Fackenthal Jr. in Bucks Co. Hist. Soc. 1932, VI, 173)

the island lying in the River Delaware, by the Indians called Pownacussing and of late known by the name of Bull's Island", and a second piece of land, 75 acres opposite the Island, with all and singular the houses, outhouses, stables etc.

Six days later by deed of 30 March 1801, said George Wall conveyed to Moses Quimbey^(c) of Amwell Twp. for 700 Pounds the 75 acre tract mentioned above, describing it as having some 1800 feet frontage on the northeast side of "that stream of the Delaware called Bull's Creek", bounded northwest by land of Joseph Reading, north by other land of Isiah Quimbey, and southeast by that of Mahlon Cooper and of Martin Johnson.

Since his first marriage in 1782, Moses Quimbey who thus in 1801 acquired the 75 acre tract on the Delaware River front opposite Bull's Island, formerly part of his father's estate, apparently had been living thereon in the original, southeast unit of the house (here considered) in its unusual situation against the high rock bank which rises along the river bank. By a deed of 28 March 1810, he, being still of Amwell Township and supposedly still occupying that house there, sold to Nathaniel Saxton of Flemington for \$400 the remaining 15 acres of the tract "with all and singular the building and improvements", describing a lot having a frontage of some 700 feet on the northeast side of Bull's

(c) Moses Quimbey, b. 20.6.mo. 1759 in Amwell Twp., Hunterdon Co., N.J., d. 1. 9 mo. 1824 in Newcastle Co., Del., son of Isaiah Quimbey (a), mar. 22. 5 mo. 1782, at Buckingham Meeting House, Jane Fell of Warwick Tp., Bucks Co., Pa., who d. 7. 7. 1799, mar. 2nd 13. 11 mo. 1800 at Plumstead Mtg. Hse. Hannah Good of Plumstead Tp., Bucks Co., Pa., who d. 21.4.1832. "When Moses married Hannah Good he took her to live in a little house at the bottom of the hill called 'under the Rocks'. Moses Quimby sold his farm to go into storekeeping just before the War of 1812. As he knew nothing of the business and was not particularly adapted to it, he soon lost all the money he had. He was a good farmer, and his son Dr. John having moved to Wilmington and being quite successful, had him come there and farm a place which he bought." (Henry C. Quinby, cited above p. 192).

Creek(d).

This grantee, Nathaniel Saxton^(e) possibly occupied the house thus acquired in 1810, (unless he leased it) and subsequently extended it by addition of the two successive units to its northwest side to form the public house or tavern about a mile above the New Jersey terminal then^(f) of the trans-Delaware river ferry which he operated. The bridge from Lumberville to Raven Rock, erected and opened to traffic in 1835, probably favored the business at this tavern.^(g)

(d) In 1834 Bull's Creek (the stream of Delaware River which flowed between Bull's Island and the New Jersey shore) became part of the canal feeder which passes the front of this house carrying water from the river to the Delaware & Raritan Canal at Trenton.

(e) Saxtonville, a small hamlet of Amwell tshp., Hunterdon Co., on the river Delaware, 12 miles s.w. from Flemington, contains some 3 or 4 dwellings; named for the proprietor. (Thos. F. Gordon, Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey, 1834, p.233).

(f) Lumberton Ferry, from Lumberton, Bucks Co., Pa., to Delaware Twp., Hunterdon Co., N.J., at a landing about three fourths of a mile south of Bull's Island, now Raven Rock Railroad station. On a map published in 1811 the settlement on the N.J. side is called Saxtonville, and the ferry Saxton's Ferry. In 1816 it was bought by John Gillingham. This ferry was discontinued after the toll bridge was opened in 1835. Lumberville, one mile up the river, was known as Wall's Landing as late as 1814. We have no record of a ferry at that landing. (Fackenthal quoted above, p. 144).

(g) The toll bridge over the Delaware and canal, from Lumberville to Raven Rock, was chartered by the Legislatures of N.J. and of Pa. in 1835. Built in 5 spans of wood trusses in that year by Solon Chapin and Anthony Fry, contractors, at a cost of \$18,000, it remains as one of the few covered bridges in this region, the second span on the Penna. side having been carried away by flood on 10 Oct. 1903 and rebuilt of steel. (Fackenthal, 173.)

By deed of 1st May 1836, this Nathaniel Saxton, described as still resident of Flemington (and so not as actual tavernkeeper at Raven Rock) sold to Richard Bennett of Amwell Township, for \$1100, "all that certain Tavern House, lot of land" etc. of 11 acres, having some 459 feet frontage on Bull's Creek, describing the lot as being part of that which grantor acquired from Moses Quimbey as abovesaid.

This grantee, Richard Bennett, of Delaware Township* and so possibly occupying this house, sold it by deed of 21 March 1848 to Bernard Rogan of Tinicum Township, Bucks County, Penna., for \$2000, describing the property as "all that certain Tavern House and lot of land" of all acres, same as above.

By deed of 31 December 1866, the heirs of Bernard Rogan, deceased, conveyed to Ruth S. Bray of Saxtonville (e) for \$1200 "All that certain Tavern House and lot of land situated at Saxtonville, Delaware Township," being the same 11 acre tract.^(h) Commissioners appointed by the Orphans Court to sell the real estate of Ruth S. Bray late of Hunterdon County, convey the same messuage and 11 acre tract to Thomas Mc Aloan of Kingwood Township for \$750 by their deed of 28 March 1874, in which the house is not described as Tavern.

This grantee, Thomas Mc Aloan Sr., being still of Kingwood Township, and so not occupying this house, conveyed the same property to Rachel J. Mc Aloan of Delaware Township (in which place it is located) by his deed of 6 April 1905, for \$775, and she in turn passed it on 22 September 1928 to W. Wallace Mc Aloan, who remains as owner and occupant at the time of our survey in August 1939.

* Delaware Twp. created from Amwell Twp. 1838.

(h) A map of Delaware Twp., publ. in F. W. Beers' Atlas of Hunterdon Co. 1873, shows this house marked R. Bray Estate.

Reference:

Search of title in the land and probate
records of Hunterdon County by Oscar F.
Benjamin, H.A.E.S. research editor, reported
21 October 1940

Lewis D. Cook

Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams

SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer